

# County Line

News from the Government Offices of Lumpkin County, Georgia



Vol. 2, No. 5

December 2006



## SPLOST List: Now a Matter of Priorities

"On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, I would like to congratulate the citizens of Lumpkin County on your decision at the polls to continue collecting the local one-cent sales tax in 2008 as the current SPLOST expires," Commission Chairman Steve Gooch said after the Nov. 7 votes were counted. "Even though every citizen will not directly use every service made possible or improved by the tax, together, the projects funded will make our community as a whole better and stronger. That's good for all of us who call Lumpkin County home."

The 2008 SPLOST did pass, with 70% of the county's voting citizens giving it a thumbs up. Even with that question resolved, the commissioners knew there would be no rest for the weary. The courthouse project got underway immediately, and the commissioners began making some projections about what order the other 11 approved projects will be funded in so the departments involved can plan and budget accordingly. Meanwhile, patience will indeed be a virtue, as the county waits for the funds to begin being collected and dispersed in the spring of 2008.

## Shop with a Cop Driven by Donations

Lumpkin County Sheriff's Office staffer Mary Russo guesses the annual Shop with a Cop Christmas program has reached at least 125 kids since it



began several years back. No one's sure, since the deputies, detention officers and other Sheriff's Office employees who volunteer their time to make it happen have been too busy raising money and spending time with the kids to total the annual numbers up! This year, they hope to serve 40 children and teens identified by Lumpkin Family Connection as financially in need, the most in a single year. The benefits, they know, go far beyond the checkout counter. The program puts a caring, friendly, trustworthy face on law enforcement, something that could prove very important some day to these at-risk kids. Figuring \$200 per child for the Wal-Mart shopping spree—\$100 for clothes and \$100 for toys and fun stuff—that's a buggy full of money! Wal-Mart's ongoing support and a "wild" Chestatee Wildlife Preserve event provided a major boost. But with Christmas fast approaching and organized fundraising events completed, donations are still needed to serve all the kids on the list. To help out, call 706-864-0414 or stop by the detention center on East Main Street today.

## First Stages of Courthouse Project Underway

If early projections prove correct, Lumpkin County citizens could be attending the groundbreaking for a new courthouse by this time next year. There's a lot that has to happen between now and then, and some of it is happening already. Preparation for issuance of a \$10 million bond that will let the county start work on the project now instead of waiting until 2008 is already in progress. The engineering and design firm has been selected. Site experts are working with a county committee to identify potential locations. A Request for Qualifications for architects has been advertised. And a committee to interview architects has been assembled. Watch *The Dahlonega Nugget* and *County Line* newsletter for updates as the project continues to take shape.

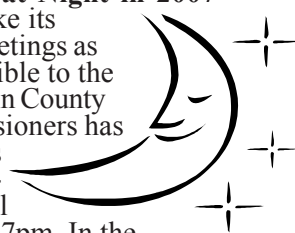


## Special Holiday Hours

Lumpkin County Government offices will be closed Friday, Dec. 22, Monday, Dec. 25 and Monday, Jan. 1 for observance of the holidays. Offices also will be closed from 11:30am to 1pm Friday, Dec. 15 for the annual employee Christmas

## Board Meetings at Night in 2007

In an effort to make its monthly board meetings as accessible as possible to the public, the Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners has scheduled all of its third-Thursday-of-each-month formal board meetings at 7pm. In the past, the schedule alternated between night and morning meetings. The commissioners made the change thinking a more consistent schedule might bring more citizens out to the meetings and lead to greater public involvement. First-Thursday-of-each-month work sessions, often more lengthy than the board meetings, will continue to be held at 9am each month. Meetings will continue to be held at Dahlonega City Hall in 2007. The county is grateful to the city for extending that invitation again this year.



## Give the Gift of Nutritious Meals for Seniors This Year

The Lumpkin County Senior Center, with an amazing amount of help from dedicated volunteers, delivers hot, nutritious meals to homebound senior citizens, the only decent meal of the day for some of the seniors. In addition to the *Meals on Wheels* home meal delivery program, lunchtime meals are served each weekday at the center for those able to get out and about. Traditionally, it's been enough for diners to donate what they could afford, but reduced state funding is forcing counties to get tougher about collecting the \$3.05 cost per meal. That's more than some of the clients can afford on a daily basis. To help make sure Lumpkin County's seniors in need keep getting at least one good meal each day, the Senior Center is offering holiday gift certificates. Caring donors can give the cost of a senior's meals for a day, a week, a month or a year at \$3.05 per meal. Gift certificates with a cheerful message, which can be signed by the giver, are served along with the meals. And the gifts are tax deductible. Please call Joan Smith or Yulyn Day at 706-864-2358 today for details on making your donation.



luncheon. The Board of Commissioners puts on the luncheon in appreciation of the Lumpkin County Government's greatest assets: its people!

# Lumpkin County . . . continued from reverse side

## Online Sign-Up: Score!

Parks and Recreation Department director Rob Staples figured it out: If you add up all the time staff spends processing sports registrations over a year, it's equivalent to 62 full work days. Imagine what could be accomplished if they could reclaim those days! Rob did more than imagine it. He researched it and found a registration and room reservation system that has been approved by the Board of Commissioners and will be put in place in 2007. It allows for online registration for athletic and other programs, and has many features that can be added for further improvements. Lumpkin County will be one of the first counties our size to offer this service. With Internet access and a debit or credit card, customers will be able to sign up on the Parks and Rec website at their convenience. Those who want to register in person can still do that; paying by check or cash as always or by debit or credit card. Staff training on the system will begin in January, but it's unknown whether the system will be up and running in time to offer online registration for the 1,000 kids expected to sign up for spring sports. Stay tuned!



## Authority On the WWW

A new Lumpkin County Development Authority website meets two goals, according to executive director Bruce Abraham. For local residents, it highlights our business community and our mission to enable quality business growth. For people considering bringing businesses and jobs here, it points out our assets and provides contact information. "We didn't want to give so much information on the website that prospects would make decisions about the



## LCSO: Have Laptops, Will Travel

Lumpkin County Sheriff's Office Lieutenant over Investigations Ryan Miller has worked in the detention center, in the uniform patrol division and in the investigations division. He's also the agency's information technology administrator. The combination gives him a pretty good idea of the Sheriff's Office's needs in the way of communications technology. So when he saw an opportunity to get that technology—at virtually no expense to the LCSO—he jumped right on it. As a result, a portion of the state's excess Homeland Security grant money will be awarded to the Sheriff's Office in the form of 25 brand new lap top computers and 4 desktop computers, along with enough money to buy all the needed software, install the entire system and train all the users. Some of the computers will replace outdated terminals in the office. Others will be mounted in patrol cars, from which they will work off of cell tower signals using "wireless cards" with unlimited minutes. The hardware will be delivered at the first of the year, Lt. Miller says, adding he will not rush through the installation and training process. Once the system is in place, benefits will include faster response times for crime information center requests from the field, increased officer safety, more efficient and accurate filing of reports, and a more private means of relaying information in situations where radios are not a desirable option. While this technology is not uncommon in larger jurisdictions, Lt. Miller says it's quite unusual in rural counties of Lumpkin's size.



## Public Works: New Place, New Face

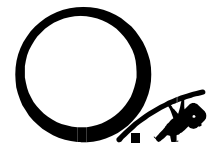
As the county government keeps growing, juggling of office space is almost a routine affair. For the Public Works Department, there recently was some juggling of people, too. Larry Reiter was hired as public works director in July. Soon after, when the Planning Department position became available, it was decided Larry's skills were really needed in *that* office, located in the first brick building on Short Street, at the base of Courthouse Hill. Larry transferred and is proving to be a great asset there.

When the Public Works position came open the second time around, Eddy Harris applied. He was hired in November. Eddy had been working for Union County for almost two years, but had been with Lumpkin County 8 years prior to that. He had worked closely with capital projects and served as director first of parks and recreation and later of leisure services and community affairs. He now runs the Public Works office from the county's Recycling Center, next to the county maintenance building on Red Oak Flats Road. He oversees maintenance and improvement of public utilities and infrastructure, the Recycling Center and Wimpy Airport and will be involved in oversight of the capital projects enabled by the 2008 SPLOST. Eddy says he's thrilled to be back with Lumpkin County. He can be reached at 706-864-9367.

By the way, if you're looking for purchasing agent Lyman Caldwell—and who isn't?—his office is on the right side of the carport between Annex A and Annex B behind the courthouse, where the public works office used to be.

county based on just that," Bruce says. "We want to get them interested enough to contact us so we can work with them personally to explore whether the business and the county are a good fit for each other." Recognizing economic development is a team effort, the authority included on the website many of its partners: the county and its various departments, the city of Dahlonega, the Water

& Sewer Authority, the Chamber of Commerce, NGCSU, Lumpkin County schools and others. Special thanks go to Jackson EMC, Georgia's largest electric cooperative with many Lumpkin County business customers, which provided funding for the website development. Please visit [GrowingLumpkinCounty.com](http://GrowingLumpkinCounty.com).



## Working for You!

If you have a problem, question or concern involving your county government, answers and assistance are as close as your phone or computer. For contact information for county departments or commissioners, see Dept. and Contact Info., [www.lumpkincounty.gov](http://www.lumpkincounty.gov) or call (706) 864-3742.

## Board of Commissioners

Steve Gooch, Chairman  
Dr. John Raber, District 1  
Deborah Hutcheson, District 2  
Clarence Stowers, District 3  
Marvin Martin, District 4

Stan Kelley  
County Manager

Lumpkin County  
99 Courthouse Hill  
Dahlonega,  
Georgia 30533  
(706) 864-3742  
Fax (706) 864-4760

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## Seniors Welcome New Director

The new director at the Lumpkin County Senior Center is Joan Smith. Service to the elderly and homebound has been a passion for Joan, previously with 9<sup>th</sup> District Opportunity and manager of an area Family Connection thrift store. For details about Senior Center programs and volunteer opportunities, visit [www.lcseniorcenter.tripod.com](http://www.lcseniorcenter.tripod.com) or call Joan at 706-864-2358.

